

In ancient times onions were considered too sacred to be eaten.



Why in ancient times onions were considered too sacred to be eaten?

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Qabbalah. The Philosophical Writings of Solomon Ben Yehudah Ibn Gebirol or Avicebron, and their connection with the Hebrew Qabbalah and Sepher ha-Zohar, with remarks upon the antiquity and content of the latter, and translations of selected passages from the same. Also, "An ancient Lodge of Initiates," translated from the Zohar, and an abstract of an essay upon the Chinese Qabbalah contained in the book called the Yih King, a translation of part of the mystic theology of Dionysios the Areopagite, and an account of the construction of the ancient Akkadian and Chaldean Universe, etc. Accompanied by diagrams and illustrations.

Published by the Author in Philadelphia, 1888 (350 copies), and printed for the Author by MacCalla & Company, 237 and 239 Dock Street, Philadelphia. Reprinted in 1988 by Wizards Bookshelf, San Diego as part of their SECRET DOCTRINE REFERENCE SERIES, with an introductory review by H.P. Blavatsky, published in *Lucifer*, Vol. III (18), February 1889, pp. 505-12. See full text of the latter under the title "Blavatsky on the Qabbalah by Isaac Myer," in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.

This excerpt is from Appendix C., "Construction of the Akkadian, Chaldean, and Babylonian Universe," p. 451.

An idea of the Egyptians and Hebrews was that the universe was depicted by the layers of an onion; (The former considered in early times that vegetable as too sacred to be eaten.) The Mohammedans and Russians from the onion-shaped domes of their sacred buildings,¹ seem to have a similar idea as to this vegetable.²

Upon dissection, the human ovum is composed, like an onion, of concentric layers of flat cells.

From *The Secret Doctrine*, II pp. 188-89; [quoting *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. 388-90].

What is the primitive shape of the future man? A grain, a corpuscle, say some physiologists; a molecule, an ovum of the ovum, say others. If it could be analysed — by the microscope or otherwise — of what ought we to expect to find it composed? Analogically, we should say, of a nucleus of inorganic matter, deposited from the circulation at the germinating point, and united with a deposit of organic matter. In other words, this infinitesimal nucleus of the future man is composed of the same elements as a stone — of the same elements as the earth, which the man is destined to inhabit. Moses is cited by the Kabbalists as authority for the remark, that it required earth and water to make a living being, and thus it may be said that man first appears as a stone.

¹ [Cf. the famous ornate domes of "The Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood," in St. Petersburg.]

² Frontispiece: Red Onion, by Susannah Blaxill.

At the end of three or four weeks the ovum has assumed a plant-like appearance, one extremity having become spheroidal and the other tapering, like a carrot. Upon dissection it is found to be composed, like an onion, of very delicate laminæ or coats, enclosing a liquid.¹ The laminæ approach each other at the lower end, and the embryo hangs from the root of the umbilicus almost like the fruit from the bough. The stone has now become changed, by metempsychosis, into a plant. Then the embryonic creature begins to shoot out, from the inside outward, its limbs, and develops its features. The eyes are visible as two black dots; the ears, nose, and mouth form depressions, like the points of a pineapple, before they begin to project. The embryo develops into an animal-like fœtus — the shape of a tadpole — and, like an amphibious reptile, lives in water and develops from it. Its monad has not yet become either human or immortal, for the Kabbalists tells us that that only comes at the “fourth hour.” One by one the fœtus assumes the characteristics of the human being, the first flutter of the immortal breath passes through its being; he moves; nature opens the way for him; ushers him into the world; and the divine essence settles in the infant frame, which it will inhabit until the moment of physical death, when man becomes a spirit.

This mysterious process of a nine-months’ formation the Kabbalists call the completion of the “individual cycle of evolution.” As the fœtus develops from the *liquor amnii* in the womb, so the earths germinate in the universal ether, or astral fluid, in the womb of the Universe. These cosmic children, like their pigmy inhabitants, are at first nuclei; then ovules; then gradually mature; and becoming mothers in their turn, develop mineral, vegetable, animal, and human forms. From centre to circumference, from the imperceptible vesicle to the uttermost conceivable bounds of the cosmos, those glorious thinkers, the Kabbalists, trace cycle merging into cycle, containing and contained in an endless series. The embryo evolving in its prenatal sphere, the individual in his family, the family in the state, the state in mankind, the earth in our system, that system in its central universe, the universe in the Kosmos, and the Kosmos² in the First Cause — the Boundless and Endless.

So runs the philosophy of evolution.



¹ [The retinal cells of the mouse are also structured concentrically, as so beautifully demonstrated in Figure 1. The eye lens cells of other mammals, and even fish, are similarly arranged.]

Other examples of onion-like structure of cells are the Pacinian corpuscles, one of four types of mechanoreceptors in the deeper layers of the human skin. See artist’s impression of these tactile receptors in Figure 2, and a histological section of two onion-like Pacinian corpuscles in Figure 3. These lamellar corpuscles are not only sensitive to sudden changes of vibration and pressure, they also help us distinguish between rough and smooth surfaces.]

² [See “Kosmos and Cosmos,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

However, the numbers and principles of the esoteric constitution of man do not go in regular sequence, like the skins of an onion.

The lower Sephiroth are the seven physical planets. Our triple physical Sun, personified by the Upper Triad, is the Sephirothal Crown.

From *The True Colours of Man*,¹ pp. 51-52, quoting *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. II) pp. 545-47.

In the same way the right and left nostrils, into which is breathed the “Breath of Lives,”² are here said to correspond with the Sun and Moon, as Brahmā-Prajāpati and Vāch, or Osiris and Isis, are the parents of the natural life. This Quaternary, *viz.*, two eyes and two nostrils, Mercury and Venus, Sun and Moon, constitutes the Kabbalistic Guardian Angels of the Four Corners of the Earth. It is the same in the Eastern esoteric philosophy, which, however, adds that the Sun is not a planet, but the central star of our system, and the Moon a dead planet, from which all the principles are gone, both being substitutes, the one for an invisible intra-Mercurial planet, and the other for a planet which seems to have now altogether disappeared from view.

The real Sephiroth are the Four Maharajas of the Secret Doctrine: Sun, Moon, Mercury, and Venus.

These are the Four Mahārājas of *The Secret Doctrine*,³ the “Four Holy Ones” connected with Karma and Humanity, Kosmos and Man, in all their aspects. They are: the Sun, or its substitute Michael; Moon, or substitute Gabriel; Mercury, Raphael; and Venus, Uriel. It need hardly be said here again that the planetary bodies themselves, being only physical symbols, are not often referred to in the Esoteric System, but, as a rule, their cosmic, psychic, physical and spiritual forces are symbolized under these names. In short, it is the seven physical planets, which are the lower Sephiroth of the Kabbalah and our *triple* physical Sun whose reflection only we see, which is symbolized, or rather personified, by the Upper Triad, or Sephirothal Crown. All this will be demonstrated.⁴

Students should add to the exoteric enumeration of the order in Drawing 1 the secret one, as given in Diagram 2.

Then, again, it will be well to point out that the numbers attached to the psychic principles in Diagram 1⁵ appear the reverse of those in Drawing 1. This, again, is because numbers in this connection are purely arbitrary, changing with every school. Some schools count three, some four, some six, and others seven, as do all the Bud-

¹ Hieronymus von Mansfeld (*Comp. & Ed.*). *The True Colours of Man*, Gwernymynydd: Philaletheians UK, 2015; v. 17.15.2022. This is our fifth Major Work. Diagram and tables excerpted on pages 6-8 below. — ED. PHIL.

² *Genesis* ii, 7

³ Vol. I, p. 122

⁴ Meanwhile we point out for confirmation Origen’s works, who says that “the seven ruling daimōns” (genii or planetary rulers) are Michael, the Sun (the lion-like); the second in order, the Bull, Jupiter or Suriel, etc. [*Contra Celsum* VI, § xxx] and all these, the “Seven of the Presence,” are the Sephiroth. The Sephirothal Tree is the Tree of the Divine Planets as given by Porphyry, or Porphyry’s Tree, as it is usually called.

⁵ [The Divine Pedigree of Man, on page 6 below. — ED. PHIL.]

dhist Esotericists. In Drawing 1, the numbers of the principles disagree with the numbers used in Diagram 1,¹ simply because the first are those hitherto used in the semi-exoteric teachings of Theosophy, for instance in *Esoteric Buddhism*. As said in *The Secret Doctrine*,² since the fourteenth century the Esoteric School has been divided into two departments, one for the inner Lanoos, or higher Chelas, the other for the outer circle, or lay Chelas. Mr. Sinnett was distinctly told in the letters he received from one of the Gurus that he could not be taught the real Esoteric Doctrine given out only to the pledged Disciples of the Inner Circle. Therefore, it would perhaps simplify matters if each student would add to the exoteric enumeration of the order in Drawing 1 the secret one as given in Diagram 2.³ But even that would require special study. The numbers and principles do not go in regular sequence, like the skins of an onion, but the student must work out for himself the number appropriate to each of his principles, when the time comes for him to enter upon practical study. The above will suggest to the student the necessity of knowing the principles by their names and their appropriate faculties apart from any system of enumeration, or by association with their corresponding centres of action, colours, sounds, etc., until these become inseparable.

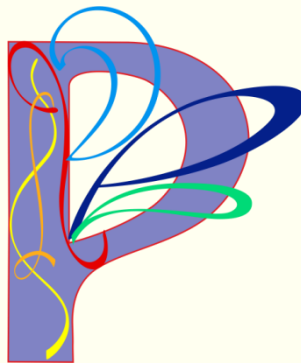


Diagram and tables excerpted from “The True Colours of Man.”

- 1 THE DIVINE PEDIGREE OF MAN.
- 2 SEMI-EXOTERIC ORDER OF MAN’S SEVEN PRINCIPLES, AFTER A.P. SINNETT’S “ESOTERIC BUDDHISM.”
- 3 THE HITHERTO SECRET CORRESPONDENCES OF DAYS, PLANETS, AND COLOURS.

¹ [The Constitution of Man <semi-exoteric>, on page 7 below. — ED. PHIL.]

² Vol. I, p. 122

³ [Hitherto secret correspondences of days, planets, and colours, on page 8 below. — ED. PHIL.]

1. Macrocosmos, the Ideal World, and its 3, 7, or 10 Centres of Creative Forces.

- A. Unmanifested Logos, Sexless
- B. Potential Wisdom
- C. Universal Ideation

a. Creative Logos

- b. Eternal Substance
- c. Spirit

D. The Spiritual Forces acting in Matter

A. B. C.
Unknowable

a. b. c.

This is Pradhana, undifferentiated matter in Sankhya philosophy, or Good, Evil, and Chaotic Darkness (Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas) neutralising each other. When differentiated, they become the Seven Creative Potencies: Spirit, Substance, and Fire stimulating matter to form itself.

D. The Spiritual Forces acting in Matter

2. Microcosmos, the Inner Man, and his 3, 7, or 10 Centres of Potential Forces.

Atman, although exoterically reckoned as the seventh principle, is no individual principle at all, and belongs to the Universal Soul; it is the Auric Egg, the Magnetic Sphere round every human and animal being.

1. Buddhi, the vehicle of Atman
2. Upper Manas, the vehicle of Buddhi
3. Lower Manas [reflecting the above two]
4. Kama-Rupa, the vehicle of Lower Manas
5. Prana, Life
6. Linga-Sharira, the vehicle of Prana

a. b. c.

The three Hypostases of Atman in contact with Nature, and Man being the Fourth, making it a Quaternary, or Tetraktys, the Higher Self.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

These six principles, acting on four different planes, and having their Auric Envelope on the seventh (vide infra), are those used by the Adepts of the Right-Hand [Path], or White Magicians.

The physical body is no principle; it is entirely ignored, being used only in Black Magic.

3. Microcosmos, the Physical Man, and his 10 Orifices, or Centres of Action.

1. Buddhi, Right Eye

3. Lower Manas, Right Ear

5. Life Principle, Right Nostril

7. Organ of the Creative Logos, Mouth

As the Lower Triad (8, 9, 10) has a direct connection with the Higher Atmic Triad and its three aspects (creative, preservative, and destructive, or rather regenerative), the abuse of the corresponding functions is the most terrible of Karmic Sins — the Sin against the Holy Ghost with the Christians.

2. [Upper] Manas, Left Eye

4. Kama-Rupa, Left Ear

6. Life Vehicle, Left Nostril

7. Paradigm of the tenth (creative) orifice in the Lower Triad

These physical organs are used only by Duggas in Black Magic.

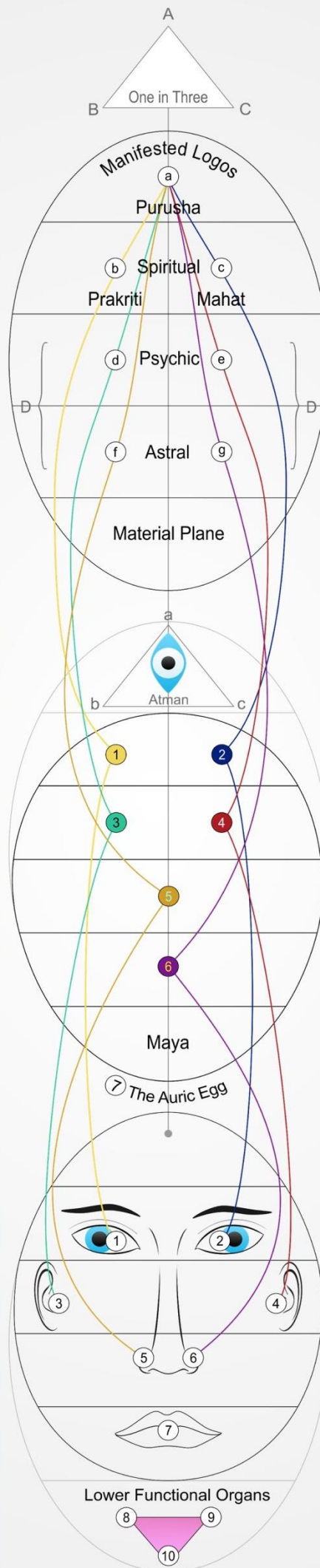


Diagram 1. The Divine Pedigree of Man
Revision 15.10, www.philaletheians.co.uk

Semi-exoteric order of man’s seven principles, after A.P. Sinnett’s “Esoteric Buddhism.”

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. I) XII p. 529.

In Drawing 1, we see that ĀTMAN is no “principle,” but stands separate from the Man, whose seven “principles” are represented as follows:¹

7	AURIC EGG, coloured Blue.
6	BUDDHI, coloured Yellow.
5b	The UPPER MANAS, represented as a triangle with its apex pointing upwards, coloured Indigo-Blue.
5a	The LOWER MANAS, represented by a triangle with its apex pointing downwards, coloured Green.
4	KĀMA, represented as a five-pointed star, with the “horns of evil” upwards, embracing the LOWER MANAS, coloured Blood-Red.
3	LINGA-ŚARĪRA, coloured Violet as the vehicle of PRĀNA (Orange), and partaking of KĀMA (Red) and occasionally of the AURIC ENVELOPE (Blue).
2	PRĀNA, Life, coloured Orange, the hue of the ascetic’s robes.
1	STHŪLA- ŚARĪRA the Physical Body of Man, represented by the mĀyāvīc contour of the large five-pointed star within the AURIC EGG.



¹ [“Thus man functions on, and responds to, seven distinct yet correlated *wave-lengths*, each of which corresponds to a specific plane or world of being while the One Cosmic Life-Consciousness, binding and permeating everything flows through all of them. . . . While man is built of ‘materials’ or ‘stuffs’ drawn from the Cosmic reservoir, yet he is not a mere bundle of substances and energies merely gathered together. Man is an intimately correlated *series of consciousness-centres*, and these are termed Monads. The essential or supreme Spiritual-Divine Monad is our ultimate source or root. It is continuously pouring forth streams of intelligence and life-substance which produce by their interacting energies the various ‘knots’ or foci of consciousness that are its children-monads, as it were.” Note by Boris de Zirkoff, Editor of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. XII (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. I) pp. 530-31.]

A T M A N

Number ¹	Metal	Planet	Human Principle ²	Day of the Week	Colour	Sound ³	
						Sanskrit	Italian
1 And Number 10. ⁴ Physical Man's Keypnote	Iron	Mars ♂ The Planet of Generation	Kama-Rupa The vehicle or seat of the animal instincts and passions	Tuesday Dies Martis, or Tiw	Red	Sa	Do
2 Life Spiritual and Life Physical	Gold	The Sun ☉ The Giver of life physically. Spiritually and esoterically, the substitute for the inter-Mercurial Planet, a sacred and secret Planet with the ancients.	Prana, or Jiva Life	Sunday Dies Solis, or Sun	Orange	Ri	Re
3 Buddhi is between Atman and Manas, and one with the seventh, or Auric Envelope, the Devachanic Triad.	Mercury Mixes with Sulphur, as Buddhi is mixed with the Flame of Spirit. (See alchemical definitions)	Mercury ♿ The Messenger and the Interpreter of the Gods.	Buddhi Spiritual Soul, or Atmic Ray; vehicle of Atman.	Wednesday Dies Mercurii, or Woden. Day of Buddha in the South, and of Woden in the North, Gods of Wisdom.	Yellow	Ga	Mi
4 The middle principle, between the purely material and purely spiritual triads. The conscious part of the animal man.	Lead	Saturn ♄	Kama-Manas The Lower Mind, or Animal Soul	Saturday Dies Saturni, or Saturn	Green	Ma	Fa
5	Tin	Jupiter ♃	Auric Envelope [Atmic Aura]	Thursday Dies Jovis, or Thor	Blue	Pa	Sol
6	Copper When alloyed becomes Bronze, the dual principle.	Venus ♀ The Morning and the Evening Star	Manas The Higher Mind, or Human Soul	Friday Dies Veneris, or Frige	Indigo	Da	La
7 Contains in itself the reflection of the Septenary Man	Silver	The Moon ☾ The Parent of the Earth	Linga-Sharira The Astral Double of Man The Parent of the Physical Man	Monday Dies Lunæ, or Moon	Violet	Ni	Si

¹ Atman is no Number, and correspond to no visible Planet, for it proceeds from the [Central] Spiritual Sun; nor does it bear any relation either to Sound, Colour, or the rest, for it includes them all.

² As the Human Principles have no Numbers *per se*, but only *correspond* to Numbers, Sounds, Colours, etc., they are not enumerated here in the order used for exoteric purposes.

³ Musical scale gamut.

⁴ These correspondences are from the Objective, Terrestrial Plane.

Illustrations

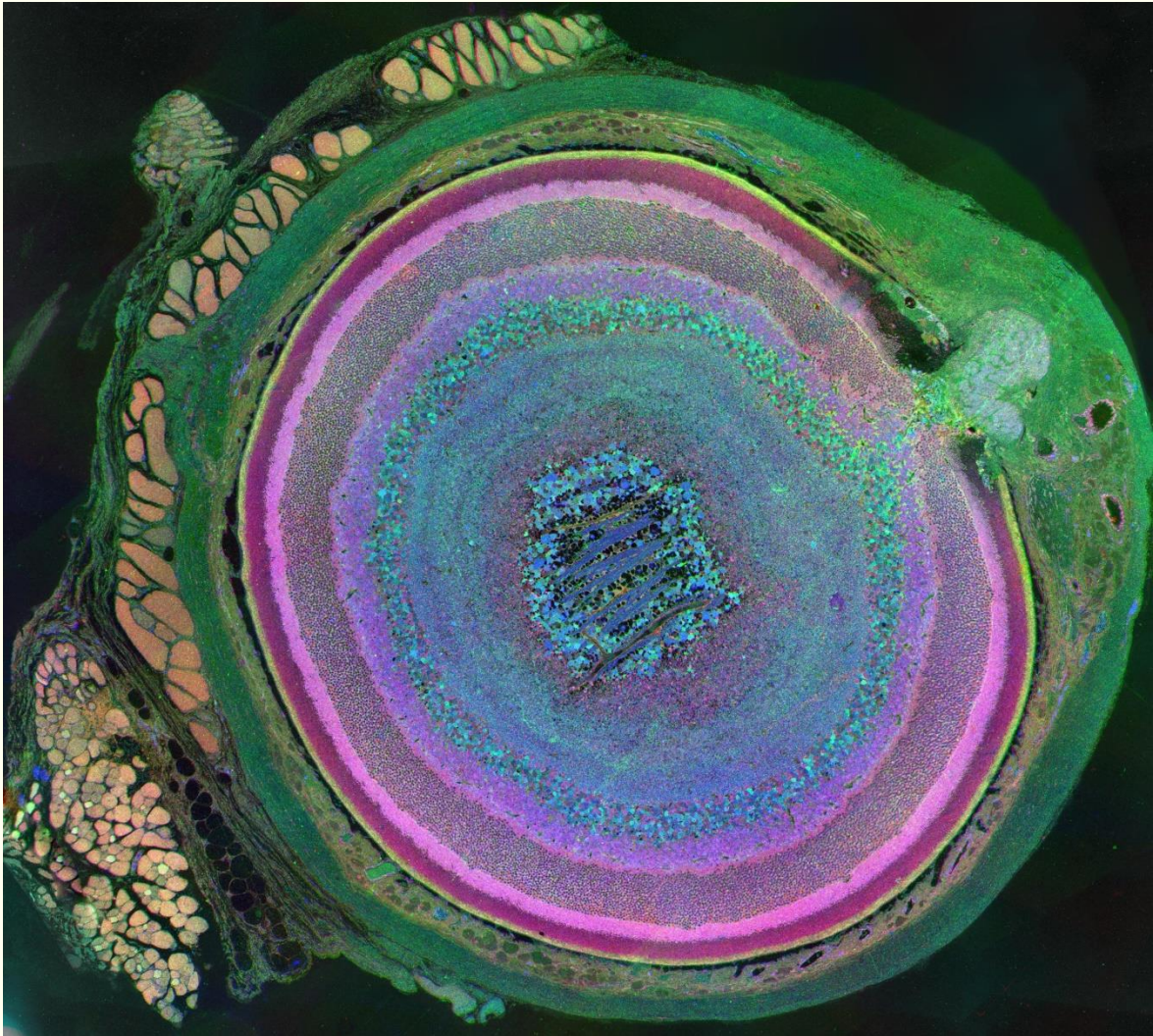


Figure 1. Concentric rings of many different cell types form the retina of a mouse.¹



¹ “The incredible complexity of a mammalian eye (in this case from a mouse) is captured here. Each colour represents a different type of cell. In total, there are nearly seventy different cell types, including the retina’s many rings and the peach-coloured muscle cells clustered on the left.” Courtesy of Bryan William Jones and Robert E. Marc, University of Utah, USA.

ILLUSTRATIONS
ONION-LIKE STRUCTURE OF THE TACTILE RECEPTORS IN THE HUMAN SKIN

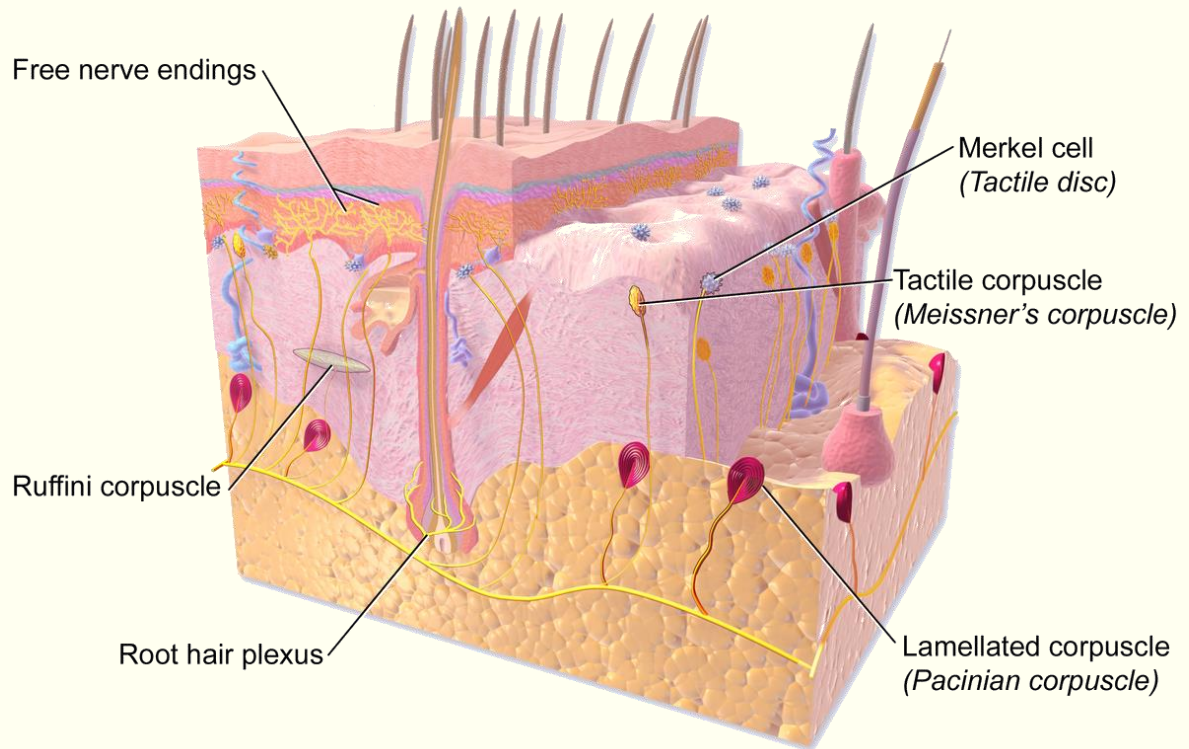


Figure 2. Four types of tactile receptors in the deeper layers of the human skin

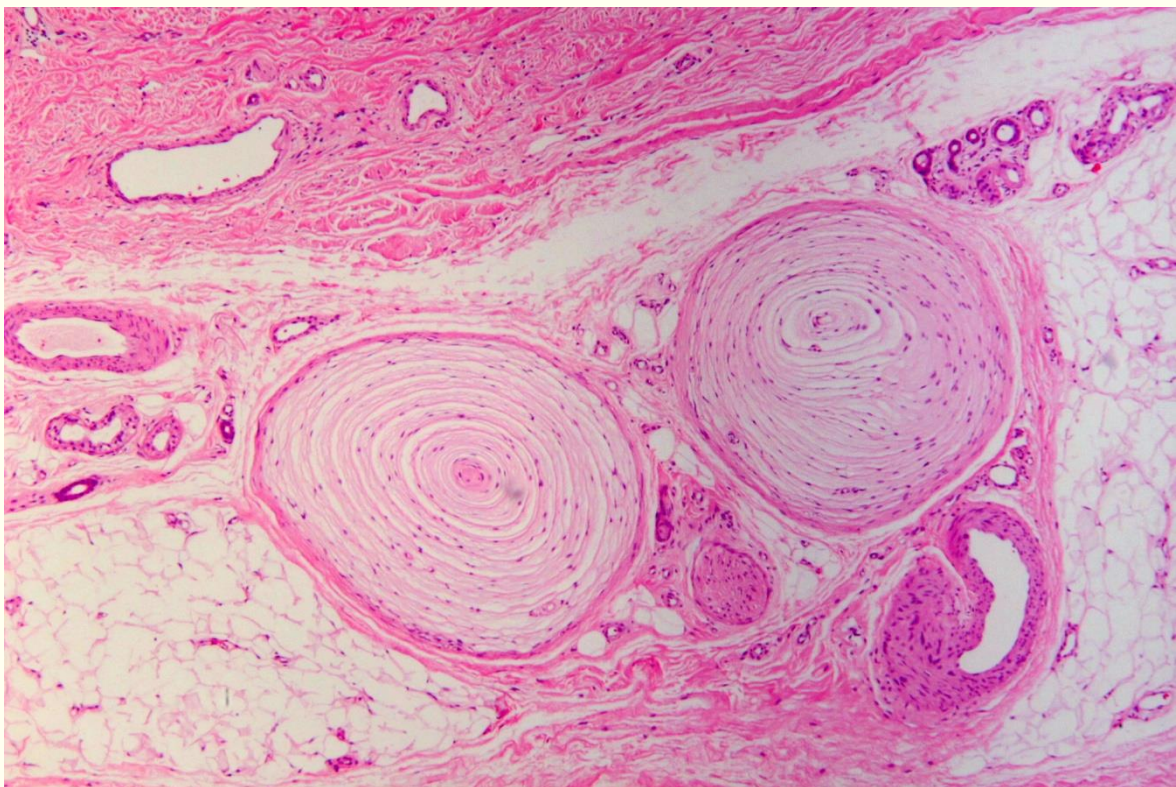


Figure 3. Histological section of two Pacinian corpuscles

Suggested reading for students.



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